

**Gothic  
Monuments**  
by  
**John Sibbs.**







A

SERIES OF DESIGNS

FOR

Gothic Monuments,

Churchyard Crosses,

Sepulchral Slabs and Head Crosses;

TOGETHER WITH

REMARKS ON SOME MODERN ERECTIONS, AND THEIR ASSUMED CONNECTION WITH  
ECCLESIASTICAL BUILDINGS—PAGAN SYMBOLISM—UNCHRISTIAN CHARACTER—POSITION  
—INSCRIPTIONS, ETC. ETC.

BY

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TO  
THE HONOURABLE COLIN LINDSAY,  
OF  
HAIGHLANDS,  
WIGAN,

BY WHOSE PERMISSION

**This Work is Inscribed,**

BY  
HIS OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

JOHN GIBBS.



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## PREFACE.

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THE Author of this Work is opposed to any burlesque on Gothic Architecture as practised not only in *early-modern* times, and effected in some buildings dedicated to sacred names, but also and more especially witnessed in the Monuments of that age, and, to a proportionate extent, in those of the present times.

Monuments have assumed such a connexion with Ecclesiastical Buildings as to render even their existence almost an evil: this will appear in the introduction of Pagan Styles, and the mixture of Grecian and Gothic Art in such as are found upon or about the walls of Christian Churches.

The most apparent means provided, or rather “accepted,” for the production of Gothic Monuments, are no less insufficient to bring about legitimate principles, than inadequate to their requirements.

The Author is desirous of thanking those Gentlemen who have induced him to publish this Work. In his Designs he has endeavoured to carry out the true principles of Christian Architecture. His Remarks have emanated from a desire to help in the important reformation which Monuments and other Sepulchral Memorials of this country have latterly needed; he therefore hopes the Work will become useful to the Clergy, as well as to those whose business or profession it may be to perform the work of a Monument.

*Whitsuntide;*

*Wigan, 1852.*



## INTRODUCTION.

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MY intention in these Remarks, is not to point out how much may, or should, be said upon the erection of Monuments within a Church, but rather to make a few observations consistent with the object of this Work.

A desire to commemorate the dead by the erection of Monuments has long existed; that this desire has somewhat increased, the variety and almost numberless specimens on the walls and pillars of our Churches will sufficiently attest. It is, however, to be regretted that so many of them are not of a more Christian Character, and, moreover, are so deficient in harmony with the English Style of Gothic Architecture, and the feelings of Christian men.

The remains of Mediæval Monuments invite our sympathy, and suggest the true form and style which ought to be those of this age: humility in its most unpretending shape may be traced even in the loftiest and richest of these gorgeous, yet simple Monuments; no vain display of words or deeds present the world anew, but repose and sacred veneration have kindled feelings there too pious to be jested with.

There is not only much care required in designing a

Monument, but much experience and judgement will be found necessary in properly disposing of it, so that it may not interfere with the general architectural features of the Edifice in which it is placed, nor with the arrangements therein provided for religious worship.

Of Monuments fairly admissible into Churches, I shall partially speak in these Remarks.

Monuments originally were based upon the floor, and, as it were, sprang out of the earth: detached Monuments are considered the most beautiful. Every advantage that can assist delicacy of workmanship, or aid perfection in design, is thereby attained. Those placed in recesses have also their peculiar advantages — great depth of shade within the arch, and an economical display of some of the grandest and most valuable effects Gothic Architecture can produce.

The want of space in many Churches forbids Sepulchral erections apart from, or projecting beyond the wall; consequently the recessed arch suggests a truly satisfactory place for the reception of Monuments.

It is desirable to avoid elevating Monuments much above the floor: that unchristian pride of exhibiting all kinds of fanciful Tablets immediately above the heads of worshippers ought for ever to be done away with. How often are the feelings of true Churchmen distracted by impositions in total incongruity with the sanctifying influences of the place.

It is customary to adorn Monuments with figures of the

Apostles and Martyrs, with their various emblems of martyrdom. Figures of Saints and Angels may hold emblems of more heavenly things.

The Christian Symbols are very numerous,\* and many of

\* See Durandus on Symbolism.

their devices exhibit beautiful combinations of ingenuity: they are valuable for what they represent, and useful in the position they often take when united with the details of Gothic Architecture. Of these the Sacred Monogram of our Saviour is the most beautiful, and of inestimable value on works of religious architecture. Occasionally the figure of our Lord is represented in some work of charity, and sometimes on the cross.

If gold or colour be introduced upon the stone work of Monuments, it may serve as a relief to the plainer portions, or affect more strongly the outline, but the application of either should not be ventured upon in the absence of experienced judgement, or able workmanship; for, however good the design, or well executed be the work, the whole may be ruined by an unlucky attempt at decoration, so difficult in polychromy is the adaptation of colour.

In reference to the Churchyard and Cemetery,\* upon

\* It may not be out of place in these Remarks, considering the near affinity a Churchyard has with the object of this Work, to say, That to regard with reverence the Cemetery as a place where the human tabernacle is deposited, is a sign of our respect for the dead; but to treat with levity the ground as consecrated to receive that frame, and the too common practice of treading with unheeded steps, and the gay laugh, over the formed mound, which signifies "a grave," betoken a mind insensible to ordinary impressions.

a visit there, and we visit the dead, where everything tending to sweeten repose and produce holy meditation should be set forth in unobtrusive simplicity and decency, we find too often the painted and gilded gravestones, gaudy with innumerable coloured emblems of fancied or unknown things, as indescribable as gay with heathenish and delusive mockery. Such representations can only illustrate the imagination of the unenlightened soul, or the betrayed fanatic. If much painstaking is necessary to excite feelings of reverence and godly sorrow, surely so fanciful a system as this is more than opposed to effect so desirable an end.

The shape and expression also of the so-called 'Tombs'

\* The proportion, details, in fact much that is immodest and deceitfully superstitious in these modern erections, is distinctly pointed out in a Paper on Monuments, by the Priest-Vicar of Exeter Cathedral, and published in MDCCCXLIV.

convey to the mind more the idea of some ponderous pagan temple of mimicry, than of a decent stone needful and cheering over the Christian man's grave.

Head Stones and Coped Tombs are proper when provided with a cross, which blessed sign is the noblest emblem of our redemption notwithstanding the simplicity of its form or the rudeness of its construction. Where desirable, some christian symbol\* may be sculptured in the quarterfoil or panel of the

\* However absurd or obscure to the unlearned the Christian Symbols may appear as sculptured upon the ancient gravestones of our forefathers, yet are they truthful, and visibly indicative of their piety. The Rev. Edward L. Cutts, B.A., in a Manual for the Study of Sepulchral Slabs and Crosses, has produced a Work truly valuable to the Student of Monumental Antiquities.

head stone. The same characteristic symbols of religious faith may, in like manner, be raised upon the Coped Tomb or Sepulchral Slab.

How ostentatious it appears to overcount the virtues of deceased persons by long inscriptions:\* how much more

\* This prevailing custom has, by various authors, been very justly criticised, and the evils connected with it, properly made known.

appropriate is the mere record of the name, date, and age. Neatness and truthful simplicity will effect more than a long inscription, even when written and flourished in letters of gold: frivolous sentiments cannot be too strongly deprecated, being detractory and immoral. The judgement and disposal of a soul cannot be inscribed on any man's gravestone. The epitaph writer, in the depth of his humane sympathy, but often vain assumption, would do well to consider this. If I may presume to question in the absence of knowledge, or even in the presence of doubt, the appropriateness of passages or quotations, I would rather refer such persons to their Parish Priest; he, as the shepherd of a flock, could best suggest passages of Holy Writ, or quotations in accordance with Christian truths, full of warning, yet comfort, instinct with Faith, Hope, and Charity. Thus would the conscience be satisfied with the fulness of all that appears warrantable.

There are a few good aged specimens of Stone Head Crosses and Coped Tombstones in some country churchyards. To distinguish them, I would refer the Reader to Plates 2, 8,

9 and 10 of this Work, where are designs for similar erections.

In all Gothic Works commemorative of the dead, alphabets should be used corresponding with the style of the period. There are several kinds not illegible, which may be used without any modification, while those which appear to have rather an hieroglyphic character may be set aside as unfit for the Churchyard Inscription.



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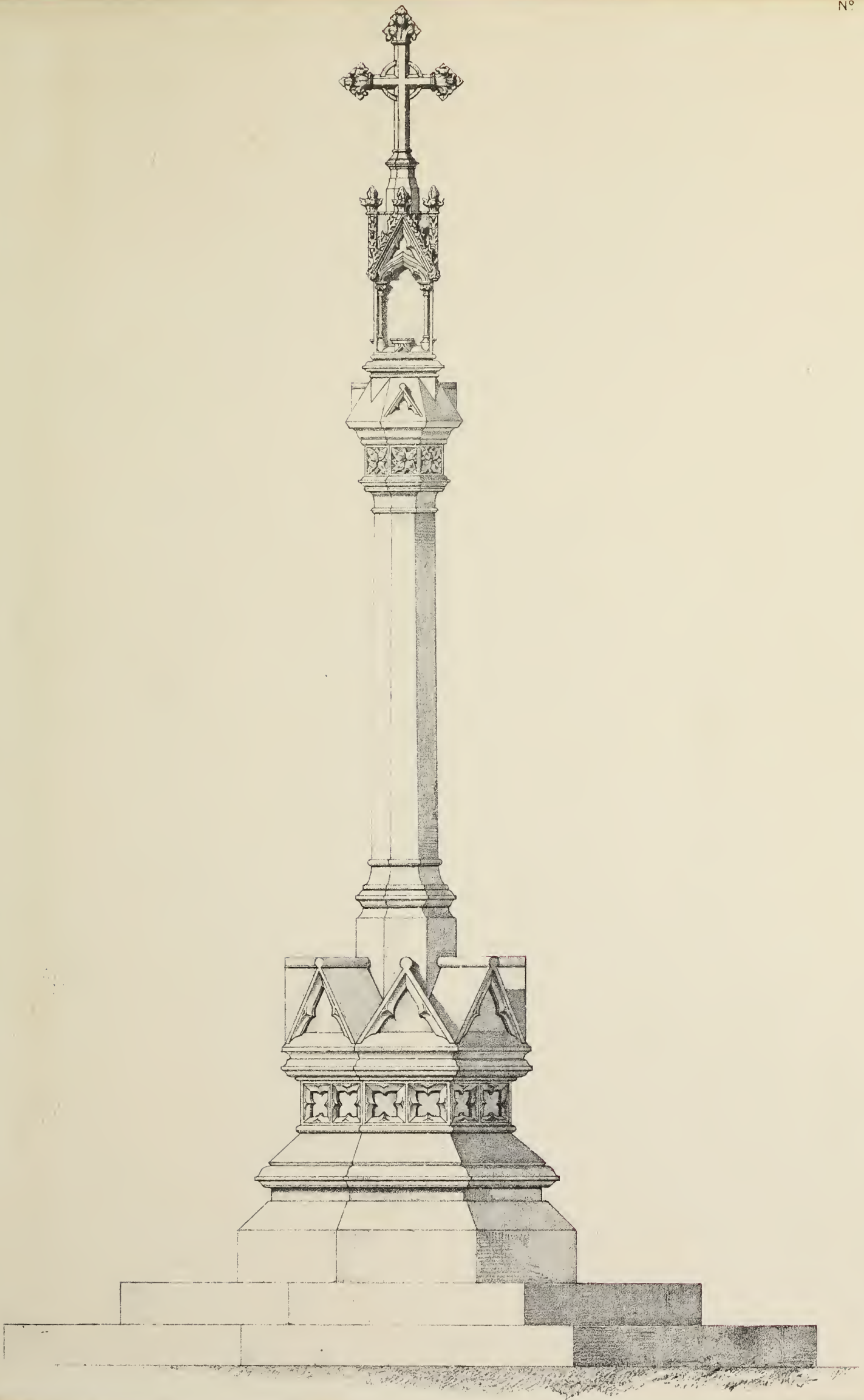
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**Designs.**

PLATE I.

Design for a Churchyard Cross. Figures of the Four Evangelists may be seated in the niches provided for them beneath the Cross. Height about 22 feet when elevated on three steps.



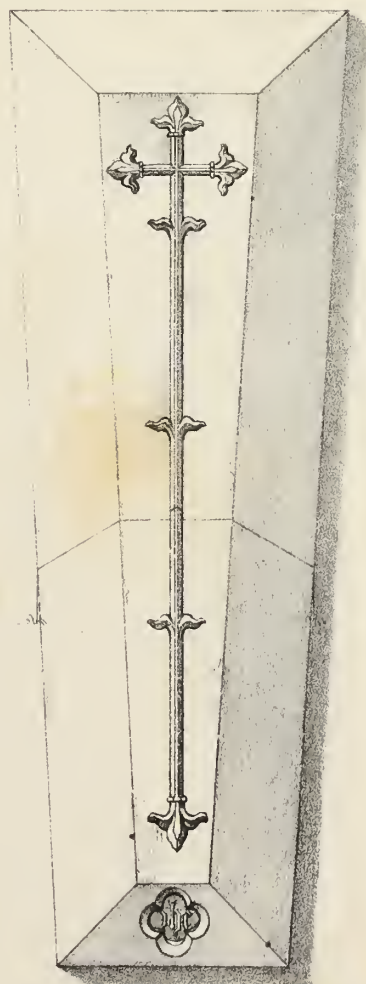
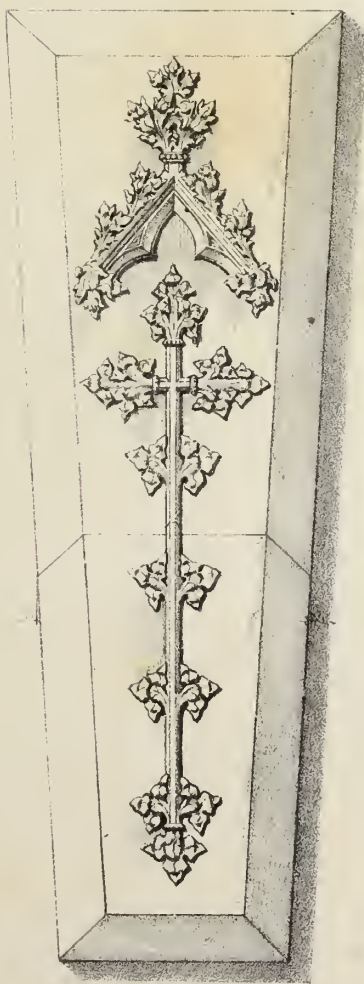




## PLATE II.

In these Designs for Raised Cross Slabs ample provision is made to receive several Inscriptions.









### PLATE III.

In using either of these Designs for Monuments, great care must be taken not to make them too large, as their details indicate.



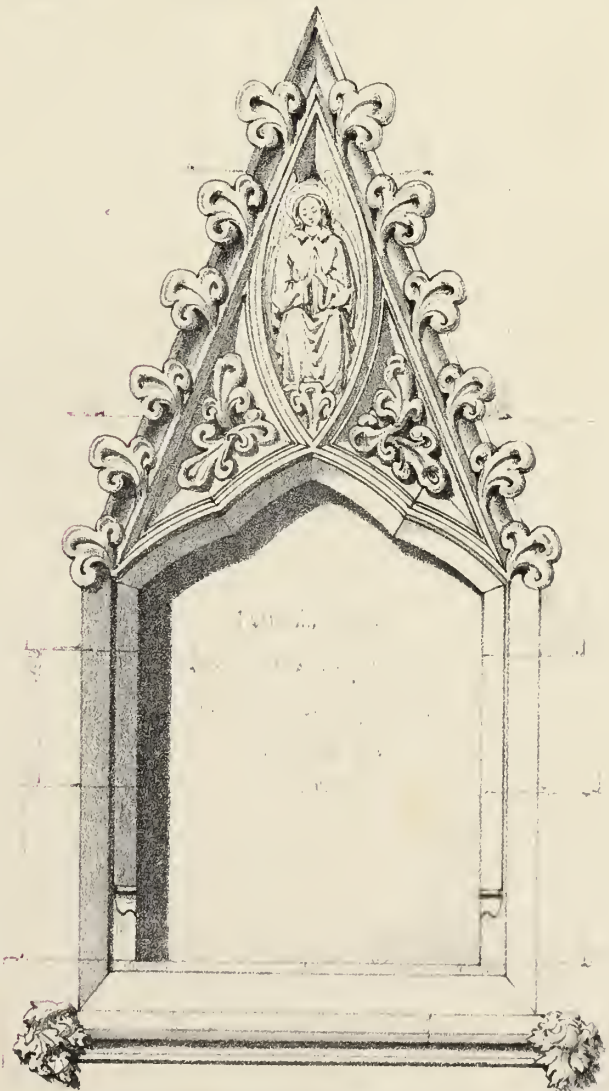
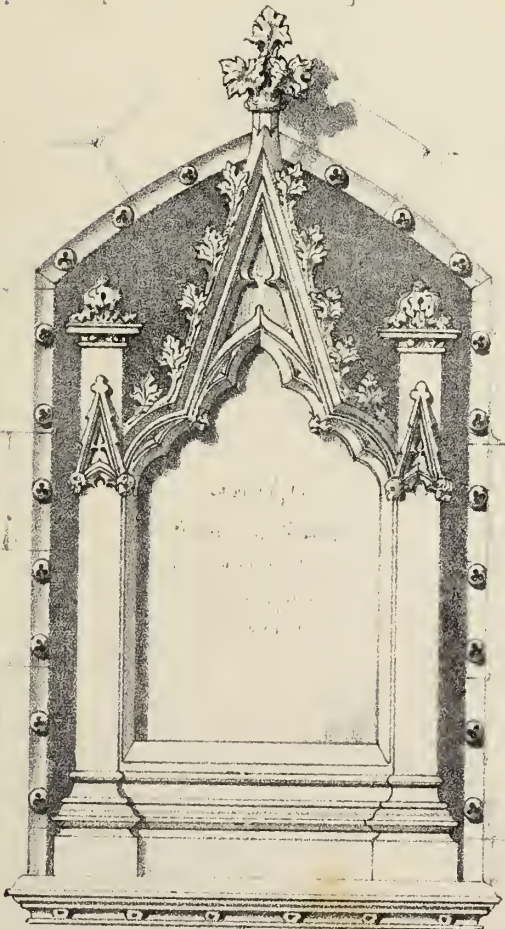
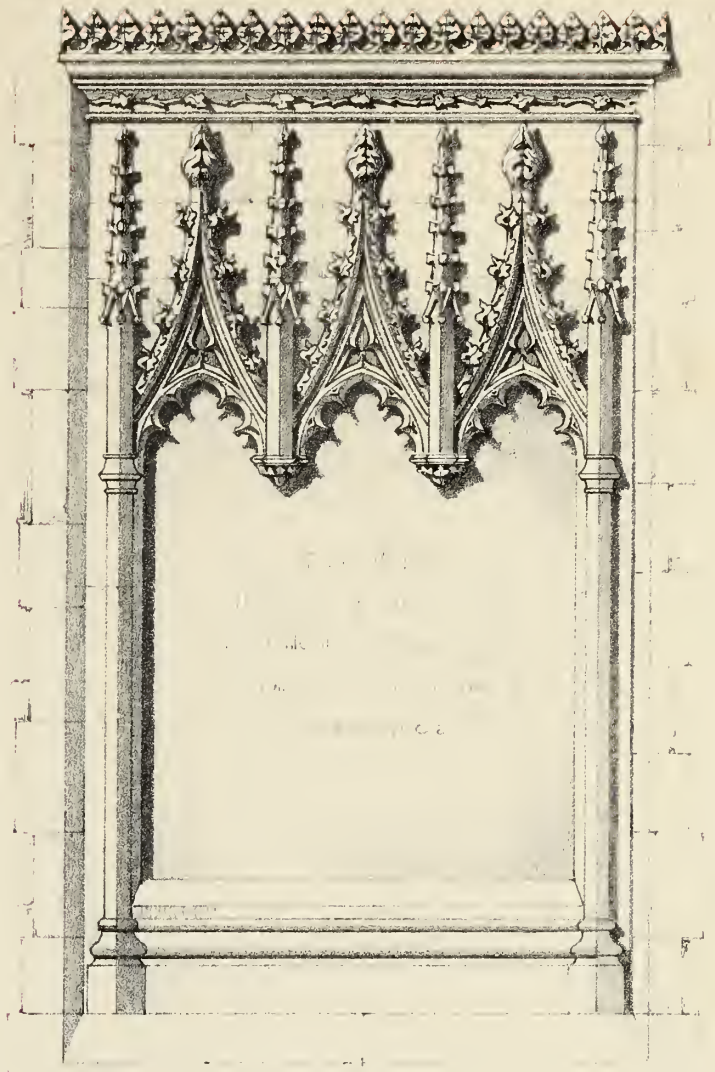
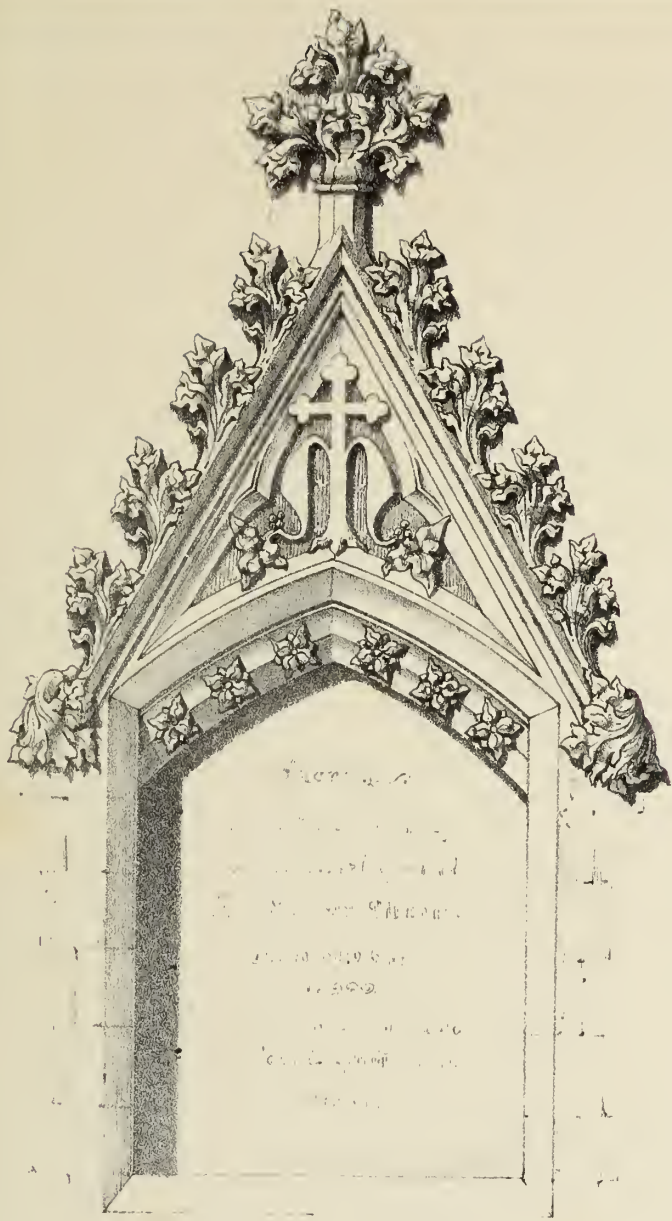






PLATE IV.

This kind of Monument may be placed in a recess, or otherwise, and the position be determined upon by the adjuncts of the place.



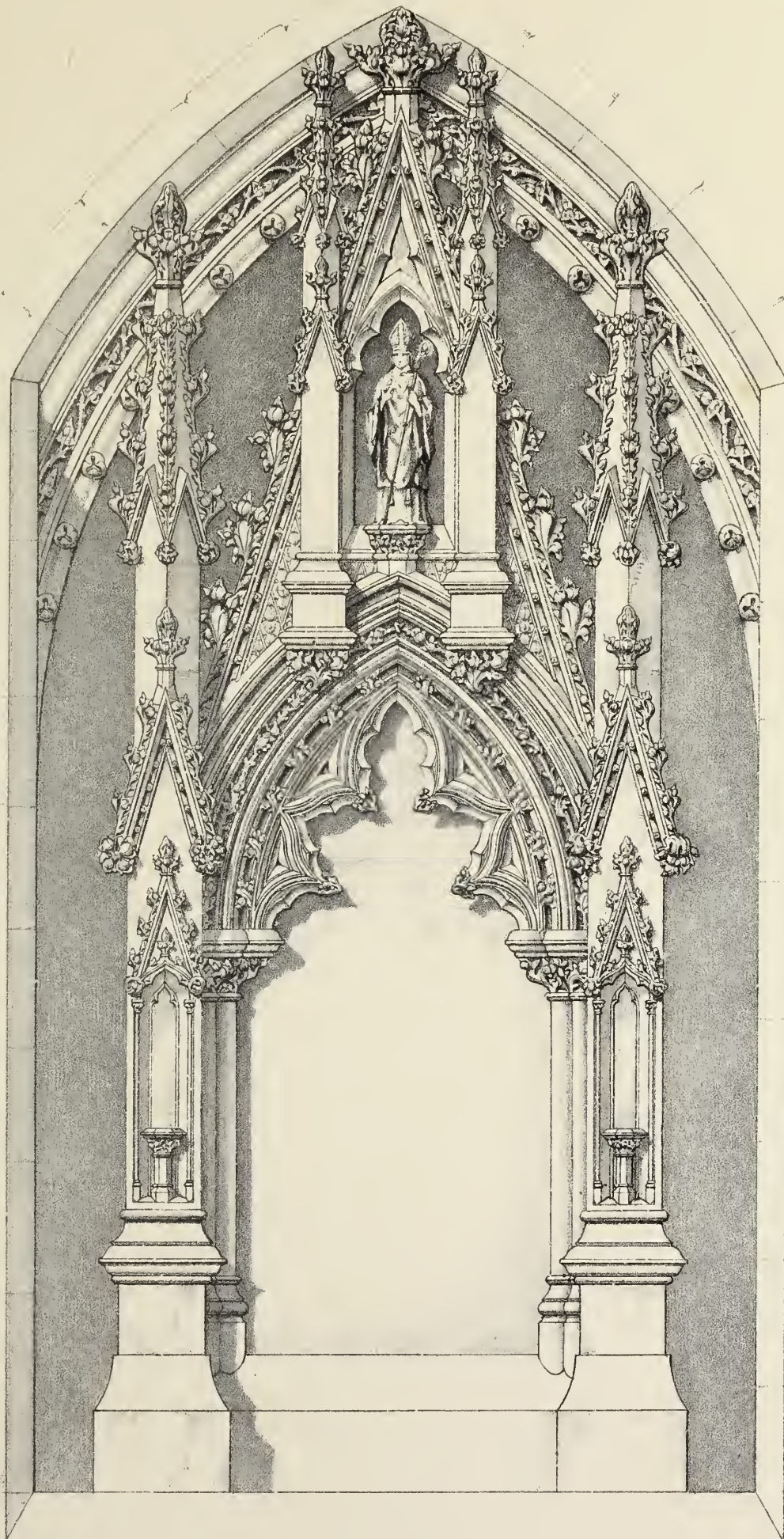


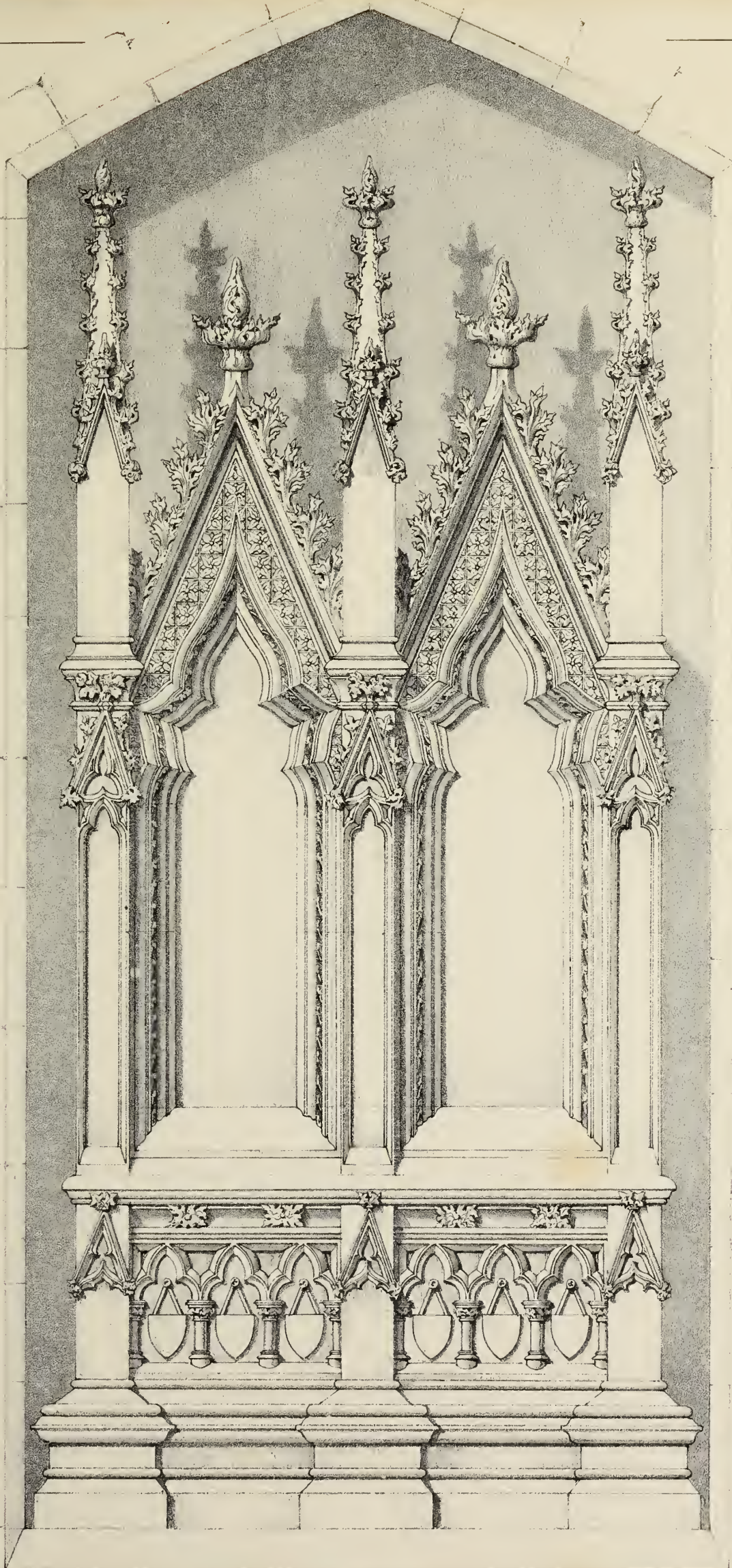




PLATE V.

A Monument from this Design should not exceed 10 feet in height ;  
but, if placed in a recess, it may be reduced to 6 feet.







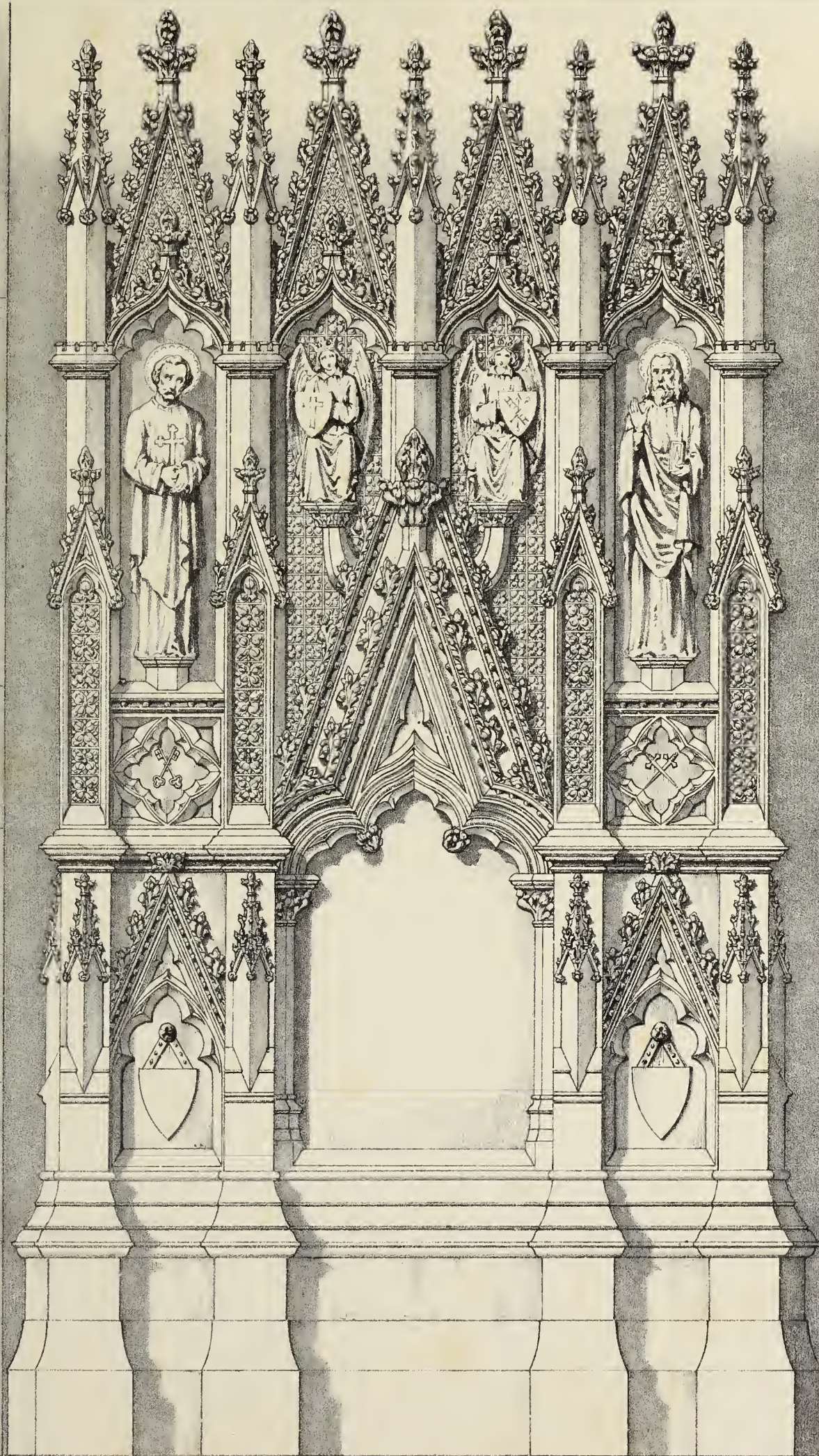




## PLATE VI.

The centre compartment of this Design for a Monument is intended to receive the Inscription in the niches. Above are figures of two angels holding shields charged with emblems of the crucifixion or instruments of Our Lord's Passion, and on either side are figures of SS. Peter and Paul. The unoccupied shields are intended to receive the arms of the person to whose memory the Monument may be erected.











## PLATE VII.

Design for a Churchyard Cross. Figures of Saints may stand under the canopies. It should be elevated upon not less than three steps.

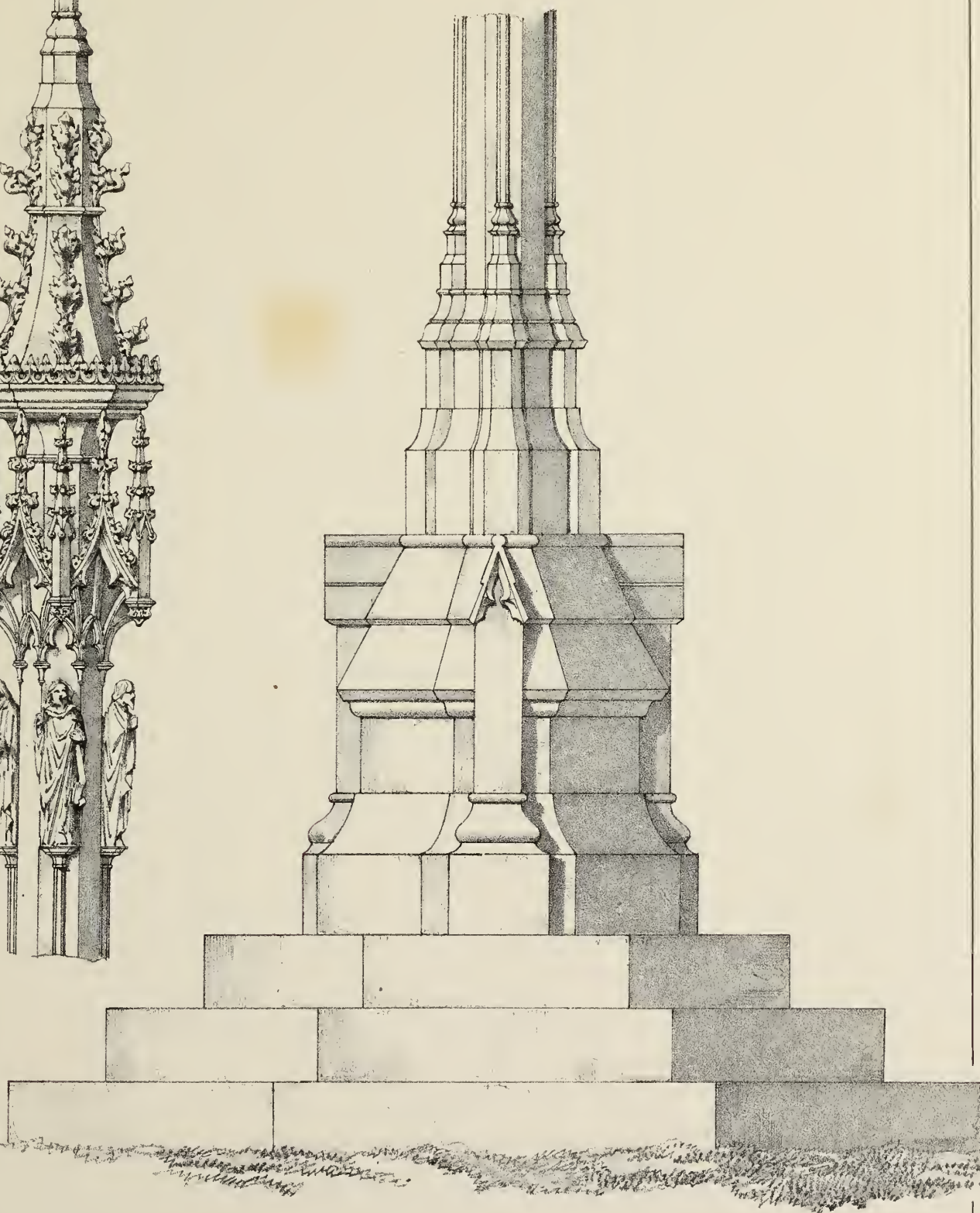
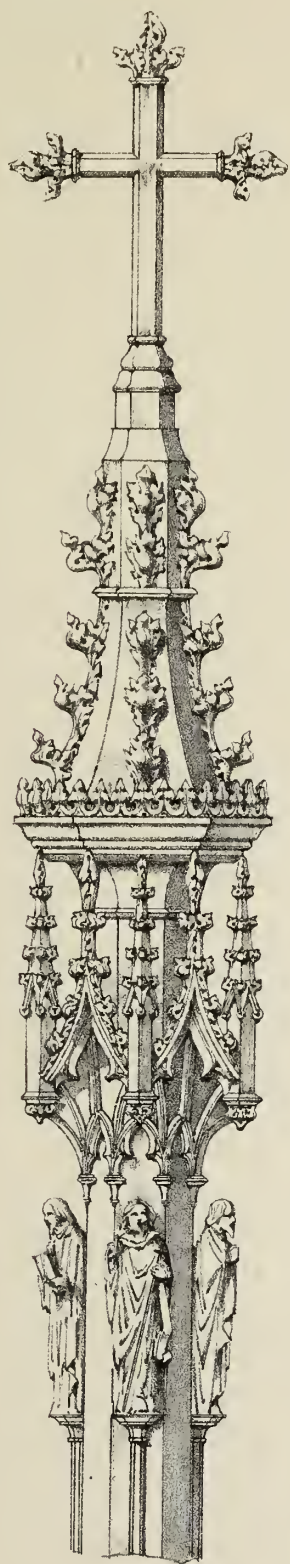






PLATE VIII.

Of these Designs for Head Crosses three are perforated.



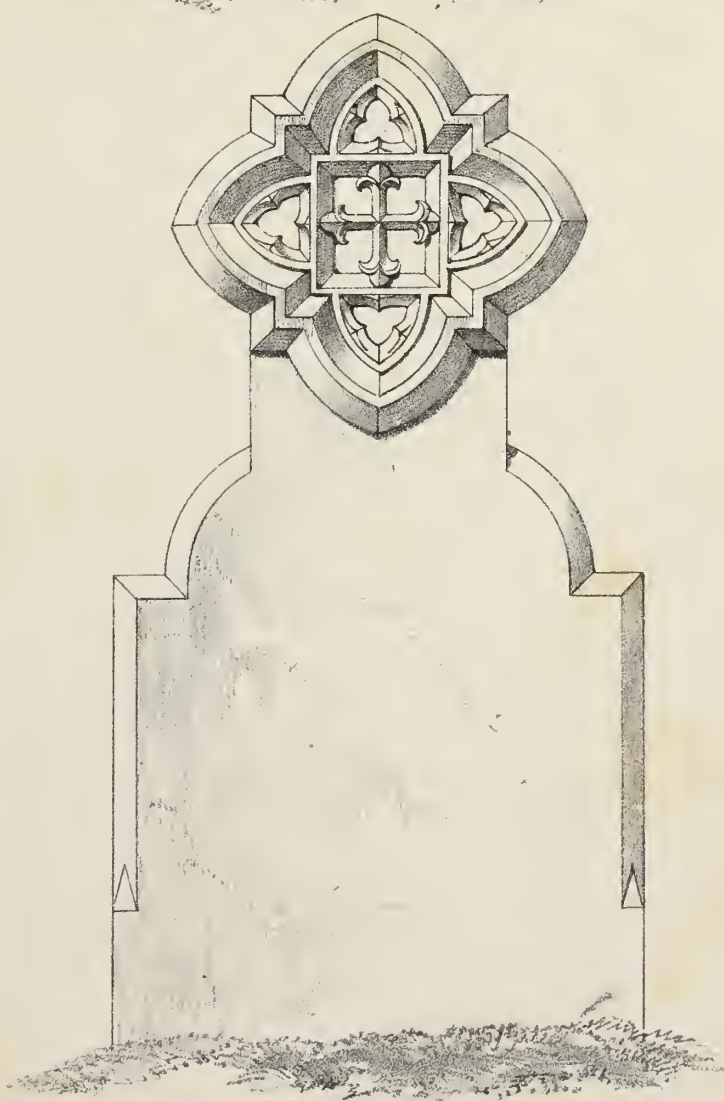
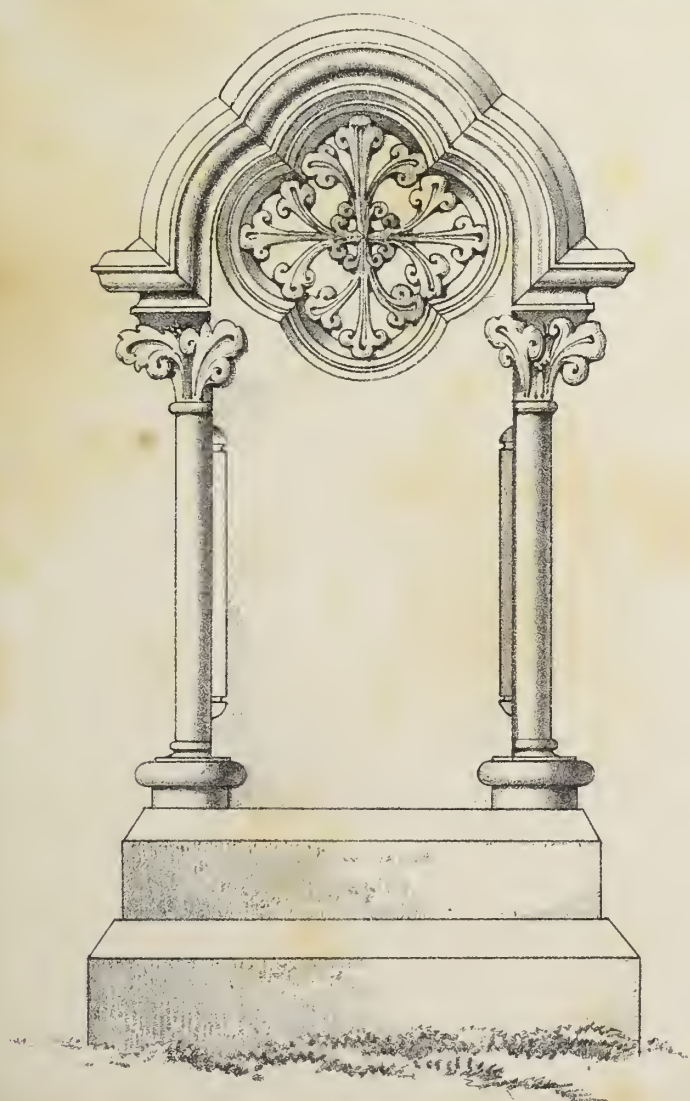
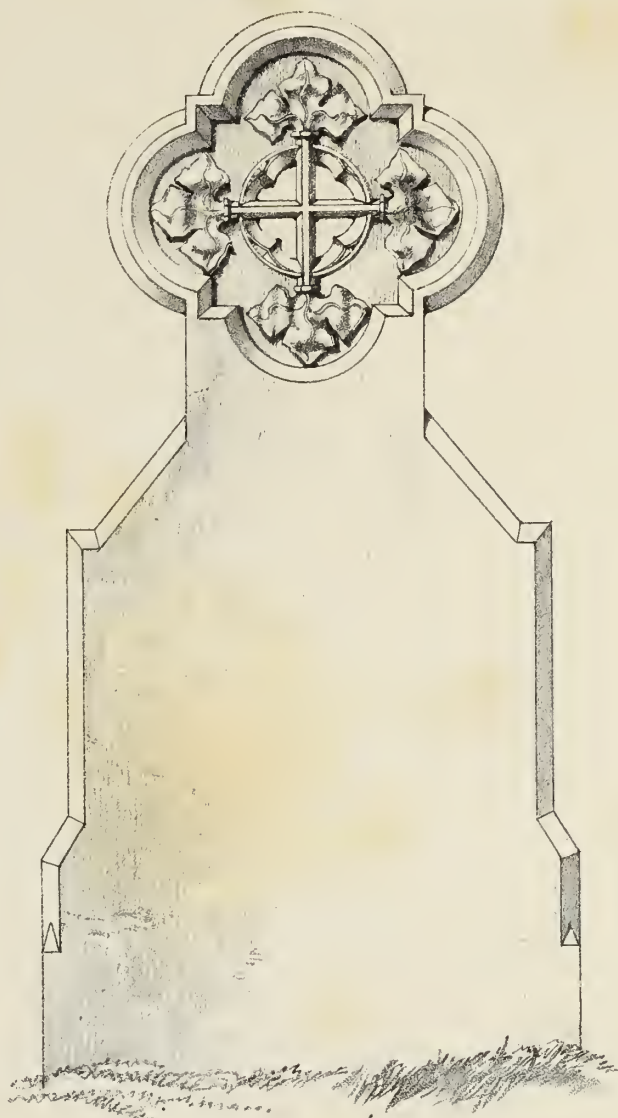
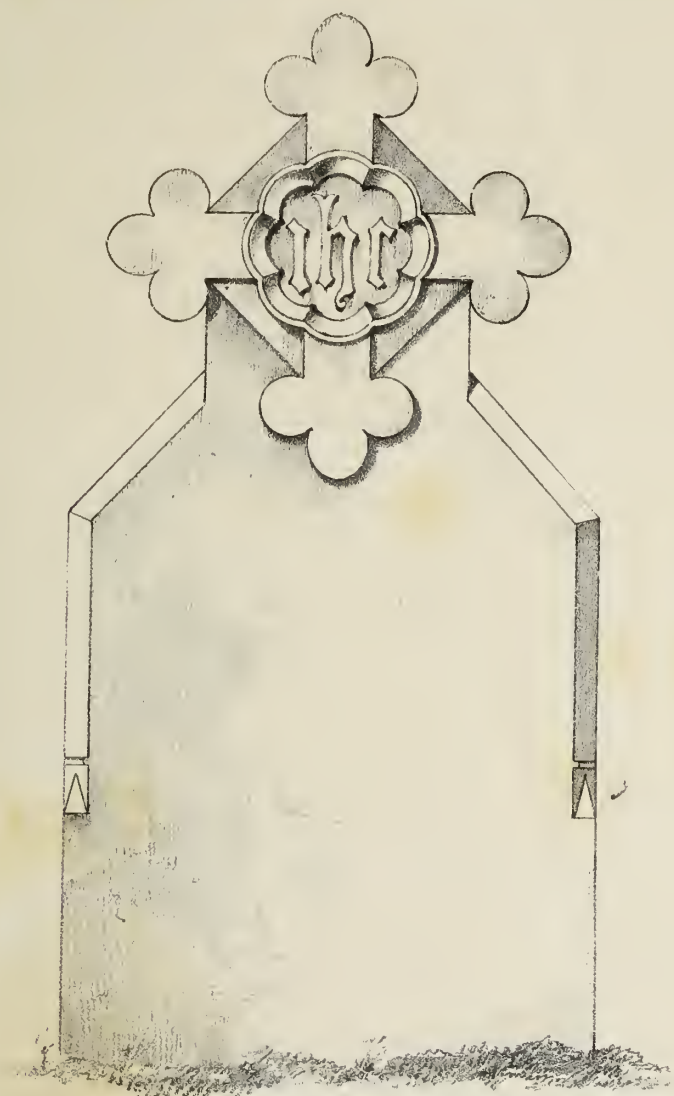






PLATE IX.

This consists of other Designs for Head Crosses, two only of which are perforated.



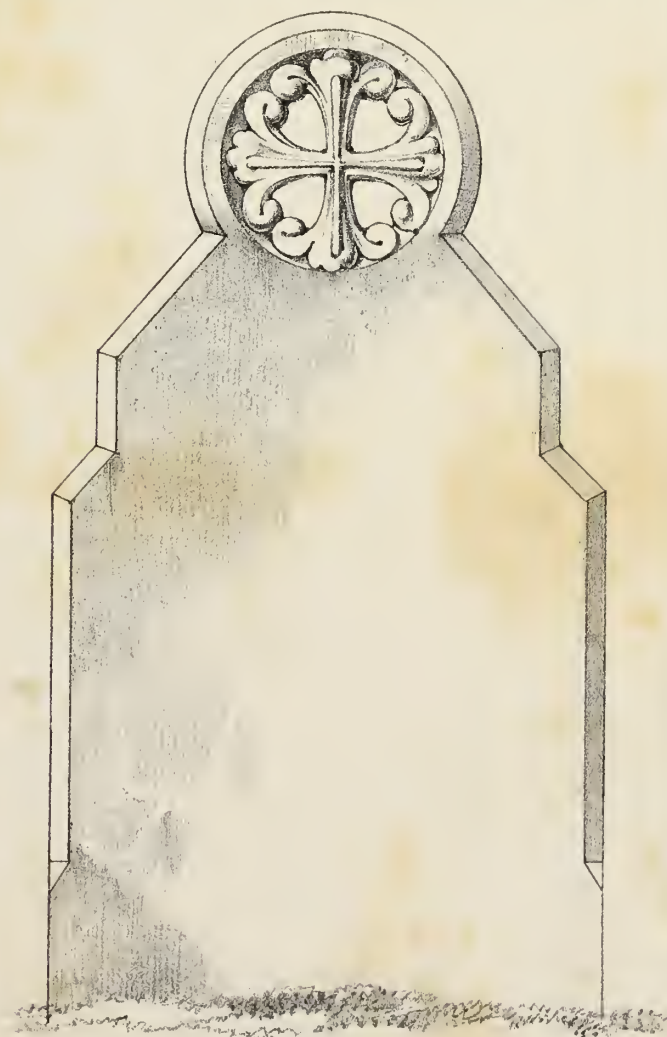
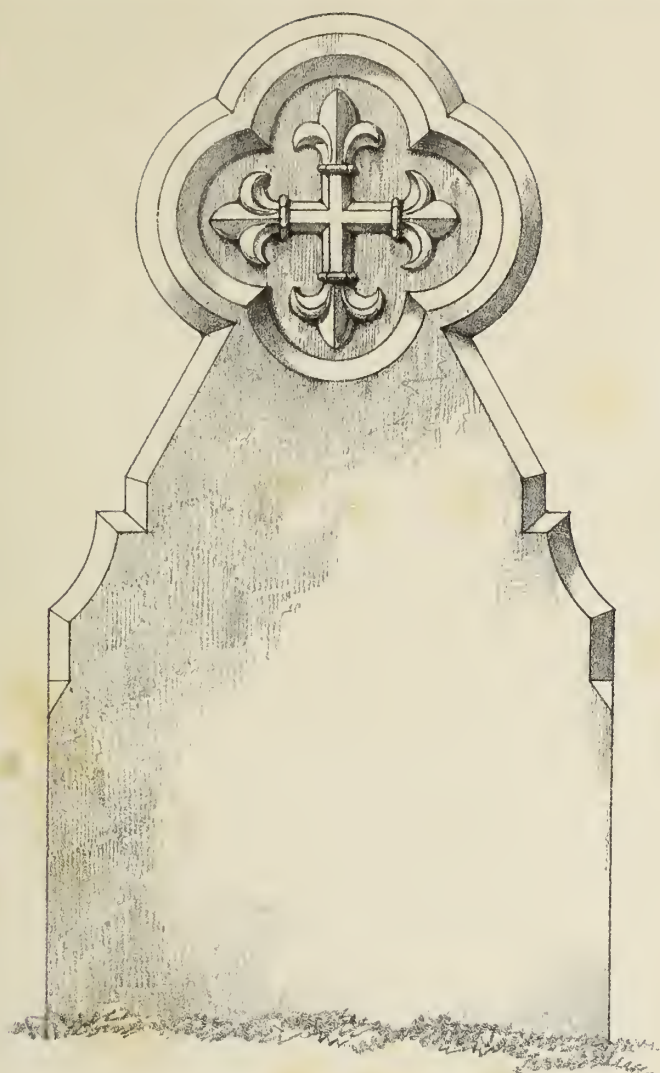


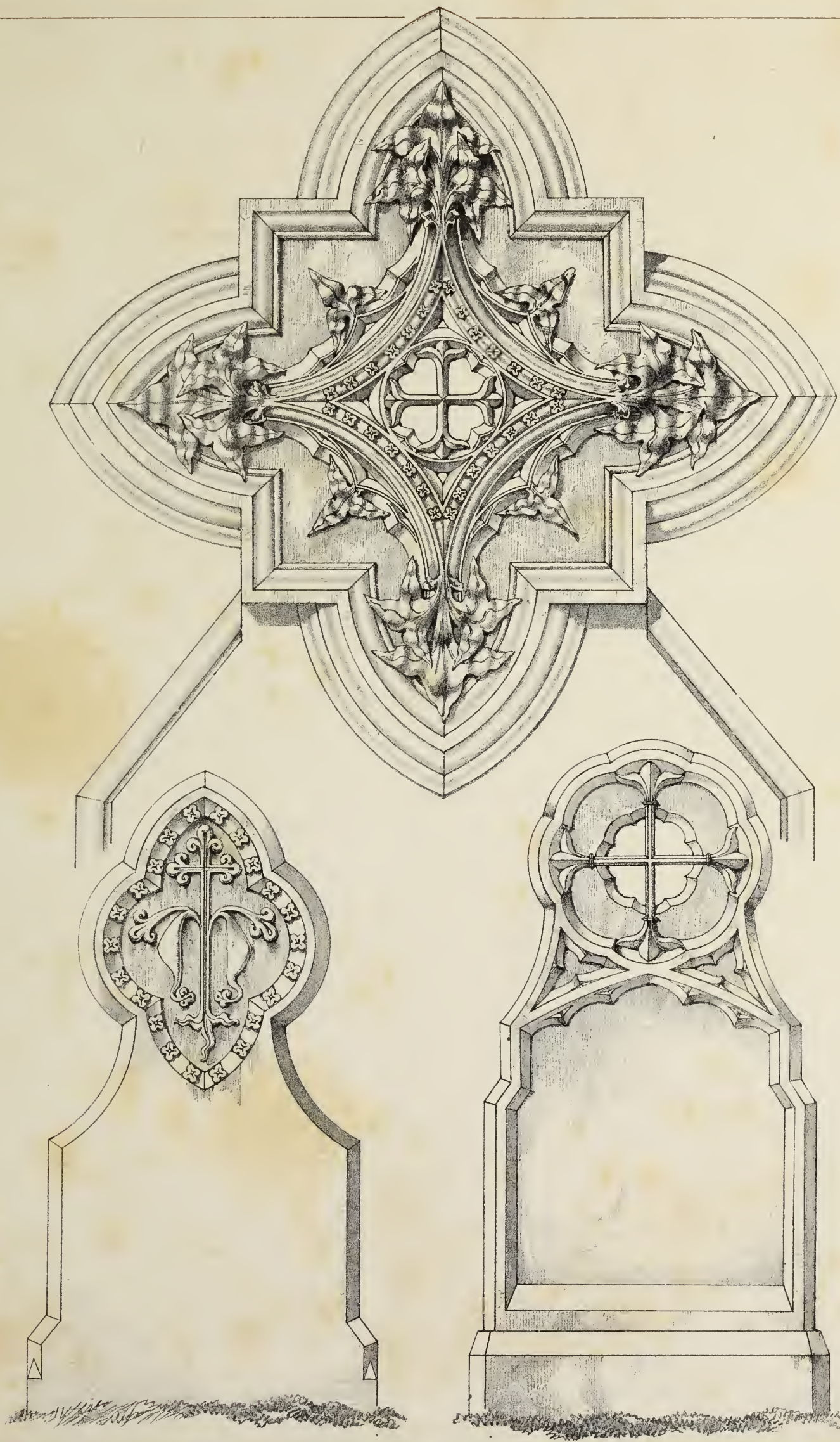




PLATE X.

Three Designs for Head Crosses.









## PLATE XI.

It is desirable in using this Design for a Monument, to use the recess, which appears well adapted to receive it. Figures of Faith and Hope may be placed in the two side niches, and a figure of our LORD as Charity in the upper niche.



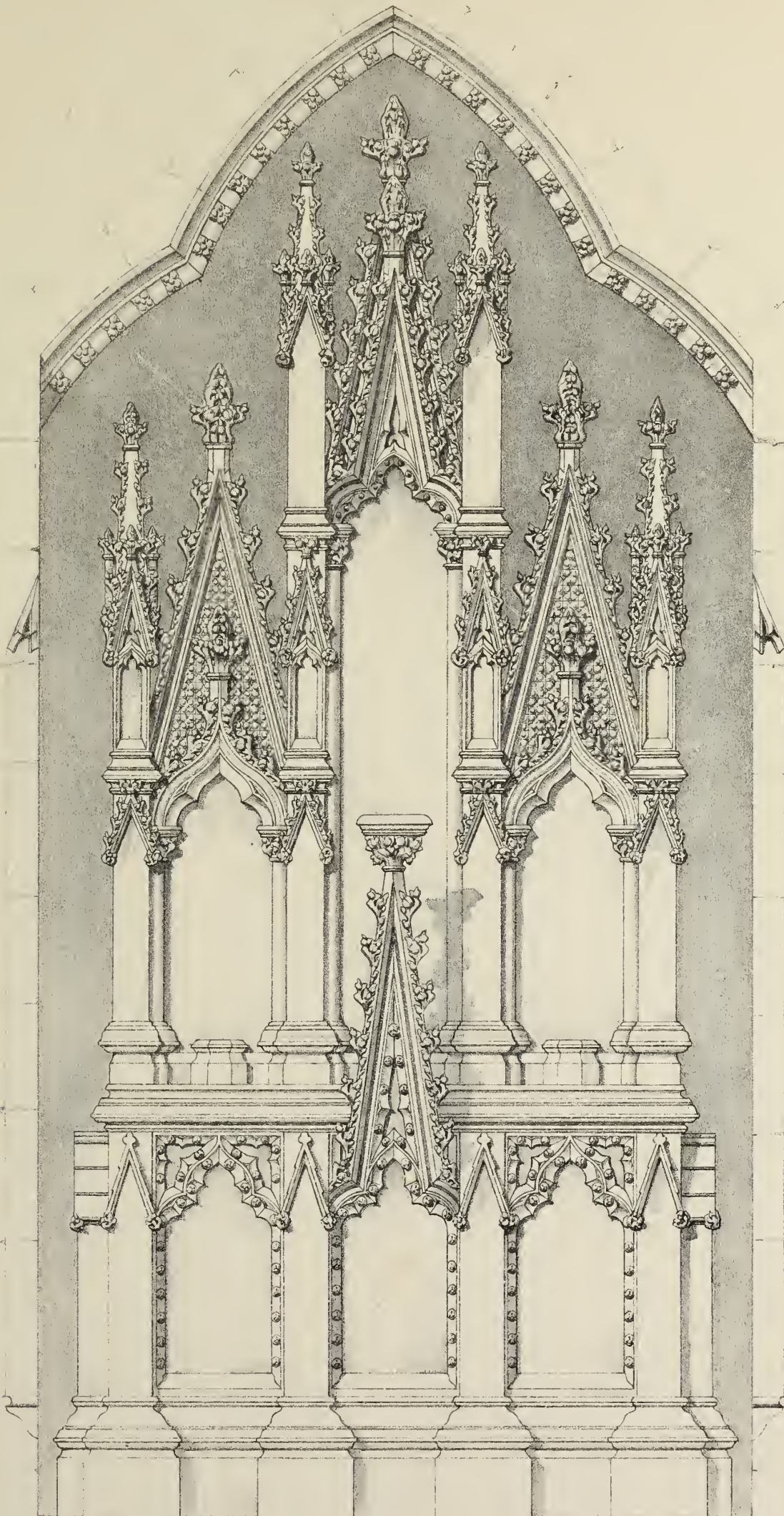


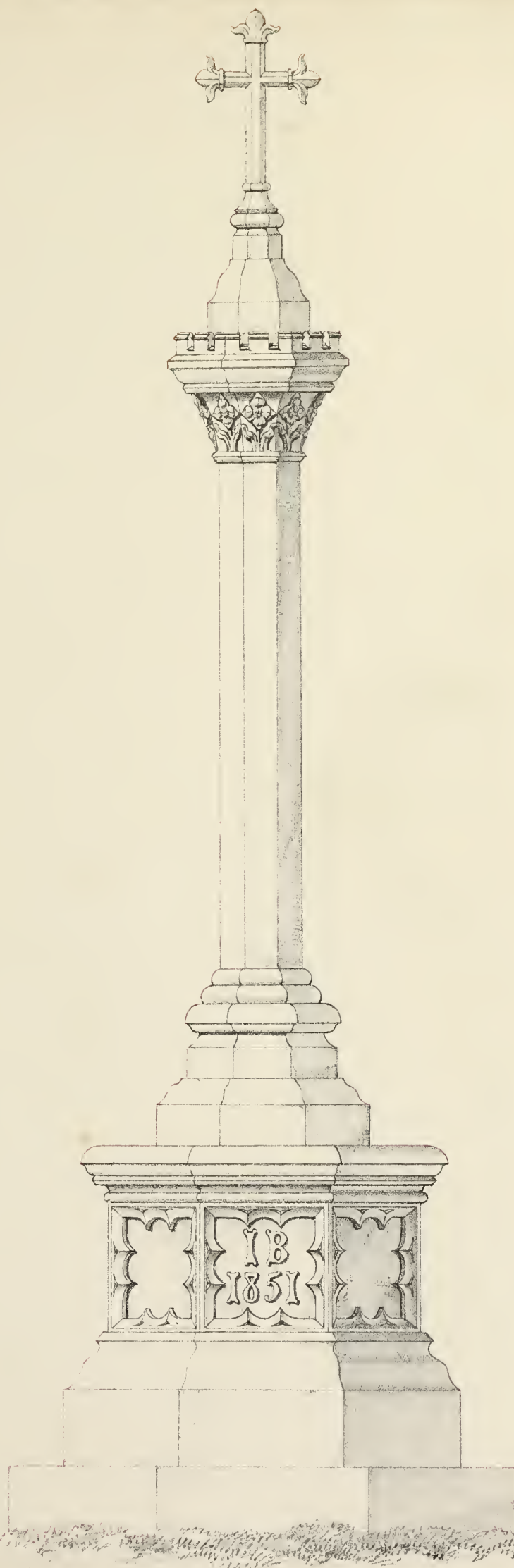






PLATE XII.

Designs for two Memorials for a Cemetery, which, being similar to Churchyard Crosses, should likewise be elevated on steps.











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